

BYRON.

Lord Byron's Story—Lady Byron's Story—Byron's Last Letter to his Sister.

As the public interest in the Byron scandal is still unabated, we publish the story of the separation, as told respectively by Lord and Lady Byron, with some contemporary testimony on the subject.

LORD BYRON'S STORY.

A very full account of my marriage and separation is contained in my memoirs. After they were completed, I wrote to Lady Byron, proposing to send her a copy for her inspection, in order that she might be satisfied of its accuracy.

The first time of my seeing Miss Milbanke was at a party given by her father, Mr. Milbanke, at his residence in Grosvenor Street, London, in the year 1812.

There was something piquant and what we term pretty in Miss Milbanke. Her features were small and feminine, though not regular. She had the fairest skin imaginable.

It had been predicted by Mrs. Williams that twenty-seven was to be a dangerous age for me. The fortune-telling witch was right. It was destined to prove so.

After the usual way, we set off for a country-seat of Sir Ralph's (Lady B.'s father), and I was surprised at the arrangements for the journey, and somewhat out of humor, to find the lady's maid stuck between me and my bride.

There is a singular history attached to the ring. The very day the match was concluded a ring of my mother's, that had been lost, was dug up by the gardener at Newstead.

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wards over-persuaded to forward it. There can be no doubt that the influence of her enemies prevailed over her affection for me.

I have no recollection of any conversation with her on the subject. I do not like to see them eat. Rousseau speaks of *un peu de gourmandise*; but that is not at all according to my taste.

I heard afterwards that Mrs. Charnock had been the means of poisoning Lady Noel's mind against me; that she had employed herself and others in watching me in London, and had reported having traced me into a house in Portland Place.

"My child is very well and flourishing; I hear; but I must see also. I feel no disposition to resign it to the custody of its grandmother's society."

"I have not shut up in a dark street in London, writing 'The Siege of Corinth,' and had refused myself to every one till it was finished. I was surprised one day by a doctor and a lawyer almost forcing themselves at the same time into my room.

I have no doubt that my answers to these emissaries' interrogations were not very rational or consistent, for my imagination was heated by other things. But Dr. Bailey could not conscientiously make me out a certificate for Bedlam; and perhaps the lawyer gave a more favorable report to his employers.

I had the character of being a great rake, and was a great dandy—both of which young ladies like. She married me from vanity and the hope of reforming and fixing me.

She was easily made the dupe of the designing, for she thought her knowledge of mankind infallible. She had got some foolish idea of Madame de Staël in her head, that a person may be better known in the first hour than in ten years.

She wrote pages on pages about my character, but it was as unkind as possible. Lady Byron had good ideas, but could never express them; wrote poetry too, but it was only good by accident.

When I arrived at Kirkby Mallory, my parents were unacquainted with the existence of any causes likely to destroy my prospects of happiness; and when I communicated to them the opinion which had been formed concerning Lord Byron's state of mind, they were most anxious to promote his restoration by every means in their power.

In addition to all these mortifications, my affairs were irretrievably involved, and almost so as to make me what they wished. I was compelled to part with Newstead, which I never could have ventured to sell in my mother's lifetime.

LADY BYRON'S STORY.

is told in a pamphlet of fifteen pages, formerly printed in 1830. It was sent by the authoress to Moore, who afterwards inserted it in the appendix of his 'Life of Byron.' The following are the essential portions of this statement.

I have disregarded various publications in which facts within my own knowledge have been grossly misrepresented; but I am called upon to notice some of the erroneous statements proceeding from one who claims to be considered as Lord Byron's confidential and authorized friend.

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In my reply I disclaimed his authority as a parent over me, and told him I was convinced the sentiments expressed were his, not hers. Another point, however, brought me a confirmation (under her own hand and seal) of her father's sentence.

advisers. For that object, and also to obtain still further information respecting the appearance which seemed to indicate mental derangement, my mother determined to go to London. She was empowered by me to take legal opinions and a written statement of mine, though I had then no reasons for reserving a part of the case from the knowledge even of my father and mother.

Being convinced by the result of these inquiries, and by the tenor of Lord Byron's proceedings, that the notion of insanity was an illusion, I no longer hesitated to authorize such measures as were necessary, in order to secure me from being ever again placed in his power.

"My Dear Lady Byron—I can rely upon the accuracy of my memory for the following statement. I was originally consulted by Lady Noel on your behalf whilst you were in the country; the circumstances related by her were such as justified a separation, and they were not of that aggravated description as to render such a measure indispensable.

"I have no doubt, to Sir Ralph and Lady Noel, on receiving this additional information my opinion was entirely changed; I considered a reconciliation impossible. I declared my opinion, and added that if such an idea should be entertained, I could not, either professionally or otherwise, take any part towards effecting it."

"I have only to observe that, if the statements on which my legal advisers (the late Sir Samuel Romilly and Dr. Lushington) formed their opinions were false, the responsibility and the odium should rest with me only."

I trust that the facts which I have here briefly recapitulated, will absolve my father and mother from all accusations with regard to the part they took in the separation between Lord Byron and myself.

From 'Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron.' By E. J. Trevelyan. London: 1850. A letter from his half-sister, Augusta Leigh, was on his writing-table. This lady was the only relation Byron had, or at least acknowledged; and he always spoke of her in the most affectionate terms.

"MISS LONGLEY, Feb. 23, 1824.—My Dearest Augusta, I received a few days ago your and Lady Byron's report of Ada's health, with other letters from England, for which I ought to be, and am (I hope) sufficiently thankful, as they are doing me great comfort, and I wanted some having been so recently unwell, but am now much better, so that you must not be alarmed. You will have heard of our journeys and escapes and so forth—perhaps with some exaggeration; but it is all very well now, and I have been some time in Greece, which is in as good a state as could be expected, considering circumstances. But I will not plague you with politics, wars, or earthquakes, though we have had a rather smart one three nights ago, which produced a scene ridiculous enough, as no damage was done, except to those who got stuck fast in the sponge to get first out of the room or windows; amongst whom some recent importations from England, who had been used to the press for elements, were rather squeezed in the press for elements, &c."

"I have been obtaining the release of about nine-and-twenty Turkish prisoners—men, women, and children, and have sent them, at my own expense, home to their friends; but one pretty little girl of nine years of age, named Hato or Hatage, has expressed a strong wish to remain with me or under my care; and I have nearly determined to adopt her, if I thought that Lady Byron would let her come to England as a companion to Ada. They are about the same age, and we could easily provide for her; if not, I can send her to Italy for education. I am very lively and quick, and with great black hair and eyes, and a resolution. Her mother wishes to return to her husband who is at Previsa, but says that she would rather entrust the child to me in the present state of the country. Her extreme youth and sex have hitherto saved her life, but there is no saying what might happen in the course of the war, and of such a war. I shall probably commit her to the care of some English lady in the islands for the present. The child herself has the same wish, and seems to have a decided character for her age."

"You can mention this matter, if you think it worth while, to merely wish her to be respectably educated, and if by my years and all things be considered, I presume it would be difficult to conceive me to have any other views."

"With regard to Ada's health, I am glad to hear that she is so much better; but I think it right that Lady Byron should be informed, and guard against it accordingly, that her description of much of her disposition and tendencies very nearly resembles that of my own at a similar age, except that I was much more impetuous. Her preference of prose (strange as it may seem) was, and indeed is, mine (for I never reading verse, and always did); and generally something relative to the ocean. I showed the report to Colonel Stanhope, who

was struck with the resemblance of parts of it to the paternal line, even now. "But it is also fit, though unpleasant, that I should mention, that my recent attack—and a very severe one—had a strong appearance of epilepsy; why, I know not, for it is late in life. Its first appearance at thirty-six, and so far as I know, it is not hereditary; and it is that it may not become so, that you should tell Lady Byron to take some precautions in the case of Ada. "My attack has not returned, and I am fighting it off with abstinence and exercise, and thus far with success—if merely casual, it is all very well."

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